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**18 CHILDREN AMONG 22 KILLED IN ISRAELI STRIKES ON RAFAH**

Two separate overnight attacks on the southern Gaza city came even as the US approved billions of dollars of additional military aid to Israel

**ATTACKS CONTINUE AMID CALLS FOR RESTRAINT**

Despite international calls for restraint, Israel is continuing its near-daily air raids on Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's population of 2.3 million has sought refuge from fighting elsewhere. A man, his wife and their 3-year-old child were killed in one of the strikes overnight on Saturday. Another attack killed 17 children and two women as per hospital records

**U.S. WEIGHS SANCTIONS AGAINST IDF UNIT**

- In West Bank, Israeli troops killed two teenagers on Sunday after they allegedly attacked a checkpoint with knife and gun
- The US, which is Israel's principal backer, is mulling sanctions on a unit of the Israeli army over human rights abuses in the West Bank, a move that could widen the schism between the two allies | P11

**$26 BN**

SIZE OF MILITARY AID TO ISRAEL CLEARED BY THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES


CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI


# Jailed leaders take centre stage at Oppn rally

Kejriwal, Soren's messages read out at Ranchi rally; will throw BJP out of power, say I.N.D.I.A leaders

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

THE leaders of the Opposition-led INDIA bloc on Sunday said that democracy in India is in danger and that the BJP should be thrown out of power to save the country. Holding a mega rally in Jharkhand's capital Ranchi in a show of strength ahead of the remaining phases of Lok Sabha polls, the leaders lashed out at BJP for "converting ED and CBI its extended department" and oppressing opposition leaders.

Leaders from 28 parties took part in the 'Ulgulan Nyay Rally' but Congress leader Rahul Gandhi did not attend the event due to ill health. In his speech, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said Modi keeps saying that his government made a tribal the President of the country. "You (Modi) have done this not for the welfare of the tribals, but for the vote bank. You did not give jobs to the poor. You had talked about providing jobs to the youth, but this did not happen.... there was talk of doubling the income of farmers, but it also did not happen," said Kharge. Notably, two empty chairs were kept on the stage for two jailed leaders—Arvind Kejriwal of the Aam Aadmi Party and Hemant Soren of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. Their spouses read out their messages.

Leaders of Opposition INDIA bloc hold hands during 'Ulgulan Nyay Rally' in Ranchi on Sunday | PTI

Reading out Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's message, his wife Sunita Kejriwal said INDIA bloc is seeking votes to make the country better. "Arvind ji is a very brave. He is like a lion. The only thing he has in his mind is how to make lives of this country better," she said.

She also listed out the six guarantees including free electricity to the poor, government schools in every village to provide free education, multispecialty hospitals in every district, and fair prices for farmers. "If you give a chance to INDI Alliance, then we will make this country better and stronger," she added.

Reading out Hemant Soren's message, Kalpana Soren alleged central agencies such as the ED and CBI are being misused to suppress the opposition's voice.

## Will repeal CAA if voted to power: Chidambaram

CYNTHIA CHANDRAN & PREETHA NAIR @ T'puram/New Delhi

A day after Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan attacked the Congress for being silent on the CAA in its manifesto, the party switched to a damage-control mode on Sunday, with senior leader P Chidambaram asserting that the controversial law will be repealed if INDIA bloc wins power.

Clarifying the party's stand, the former Union minister said, "I have a list with me, of a large number of laws, in which we have mentioned that five laws would be repealed. One of the five laws is CAA. Why we dropped the list in the manifesto is because it was already too long. This manifesto is 46 pages and it is a long list of 40 to 50 laws. I am the chairman of the manifesto committee, take it from me. CAA will be repealed."

Speaking to reporters in Thiruvananthapuram, Chidambaram added, "We will repeal, amend, and review the following sets of laws— CAA 2019 is at the top of the list."

*TNIE* had reported though 'repealing and amending of CAA' figured in the original draft of the Congress manifesto, the top leadership of the party decided to drop any mention of it in the document. Instead, the manifesto said it would repeal all anti-people laws passed by the NDA without referring to CAA.

## 'Cong selling lies on Constitution to scare voters'

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday tore into the Congress party saying it is trying to instill fear among the Dalits, tribals and minorities by spreading lies about the future of India's democracy, the constitution and reservation.

"The Congress sells fear, hunger and corruption in its shop," Modi said addressing a rally in Rajasthan's Banswara. "But the country is no longer in the grip of fear. That is why their lies are no longer working," he added.

He went on to say that if the Opposition won the election, it would redistribute the wealth of people to Muslims and cited former prime minister Manmohan Singh's remark that the minority community had the first claim on the country's resources. "This urban-naxal mindset, my mothers and sisters, they will not even leave your *Mangalsutra*. They can go to that level," Modi said.

Narendra Modi addresses a public event in Jalore, Rajasthan on Sunday | PTI

Earlier, speaking at Jalore, Modi charged that Congress leaders exploited the country and they cannot be entrusted with leading the nation once again.

The prime minister said the grand old party can only blame itself for its current predicament. "They ruled for 60 years, yet left our mothers and sisters longing for basic amenities like toilets, gas, electricity, and bank accounts. Their legacy of nepotism and corruption has weakened the nation, and they are now facing the consequences," he said.

POLL CODE VIOLATION

## IT dept clears ₹2 cr seized, CEO files case against BJP worker

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A DAY after Rs 2 crore was recovered from a vehicle by the SST team, election officials on Sunday filed a case against a BJP worker after seeking permission from the court and Election Commission of India.

The SST team of Chamarajpet, Benagluru, on April 20, had intercepted a car carrying Rs 2 crore cash at 4.05 pm. The vehicle was seized and the income tax officials were alerted. The IT team verified the documents and summoned BJP office-bearers and concluded that there was no violation under IT laws.

In the meantime, officials from the Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka, had intimated the Election Commission of India, as per procedure. "As per ECI directions cash of over Rs 10,000 given to party functionaries, candidates or agents for political activities should be done through cheques or online mode. ECI has also advised political parties not to carry huge amounts of cash.

As there is a violation of ECI directions and as the recipients' list was not produced, the FIR has been filed, based on suspicion that money may be used for inducement in elections," said an official release from CEO.

The FIR has been filed under Section 123 of the Representation of People's Act and 171 (B), (C), (E) and (F) of IPC related to bribery and undue influence.

The media release from the CEO's office also stated, "Court permission was obtained for booking the FIR at 11 am on April 21 against Lokesh Ambekallu, Secretary, BJP state office, Venkatesh Prasad (driver) and Gangadhar (accompany) by SST of 168-Chamarajpet Assembly Constituency of Bangalore Central Parliamentary Constituency at Cottonpet."

As per the FIR, a copy of which is with *The New Indian Express*, the SST team had intercepted a vehicle (KA-09-MB-2412) and found two bags containing cash.

There were two persons in the car -- Venkatesh Prasad and Gangadhar. When questioned, they admitted that the money was being taken for BJP and produced a letter of the political party dated April 20.

CONTINUED ON: P4

## CM: Educated youth think Modi unfit

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kolar

"EDUCATED youth have decided that Narendra Modi is nalayak (unfit) as Prime Minister. Will you vote for such a person? After being elected for 10 years, he did not get anything for the country, but is asking for your votes again this time. Does BJP have the moral authority to ask for votes again," asked Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at a public rally at Sidlaghatta, falling under the Kolar Lok Sabha constituency, on Sunday. "Modi suggested that unemployed youth should sell pakodas. P4

## 28,000 teens got pregnant in 2023, CM for task force

PURAN CHOUDHARY @ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah has instructed officials to constitute a 'central task force', given the alarming number of teen pregnancies in Karnataka. According to the Central government's Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) portal, 28,667 cases of underage girls (below 18 years) getting pregnant were reported in the state between January and November 2023.

Taking cognisance, Siddaramaiah on April 15, 2024 issued a letter to seven departments — Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, Primary and Secondary Education, Social Welfare, Backward and Minority Welfare, Department of Tribal Welfare and Home, instructing them to prevent such cases. He also said the morale of these young women should be raised by involving senior officials to be a part of the task force. CONTINUED ON: P5

EXPRESS READ

**Muizzu's party wins landslide in Maldives**

Male: The party of Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu won control of parliament in a Sunday election landslide, results showed, with voters backing his tilt towards China and away from regional powerhouse and traditional benefactor India. Muizzu's People's National Congress (PNC) won 66 of the first 86 seats declared.

**Kohli furious over controversial dismissal**

New Delhi: Virat Kohli had a heated argument with on-field umpires after his controversial dismissal during the IPL match between RCB and KKR on Sunday. In the third over of the RCB innings, Kohli mishit a full-toss from Harshit Rana straight back to the bowler. He thought it was above waist and hence a no-ball, but the third umpire thought otherwise | P13

**Six of family drown in Kali river near Dandeli**

Dandeli (Uttara Kannada): Six persons of a family drowned in Kali river on Sunday. They were trying to rescue a six-year-old girl who had slipped into the river at Akhoda village in Joida taluk. All the six bodies, including that of the girl, were fished out later in the evening. The deceased were from Ishwar Nagar in Hubballi | P5

## Nandini to sponsor Scotland, Ireland teams

PURAN CHOUDHARY @ Bengaluru

THE 'Nandini logo' will now be seen on the jerseys of Scotland and Ireland cricket teams in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, to be played in the United States of America and West Indies from June 1 to 29.

Under the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) -- a dairy cooperative owned by the state, Nandini, a household name with its various dairy products used by lakhs, aims to acquire a global image by sponsoring the two teams.

During the tournament, the brand is also looking to launch a whey-based energy drink 'Nandini Splash' in the US in different flavours such as orange, litchi, lemon and mango. The cooperative sees the tournament, co-hosted by the West Indies and USA, as a good opportunity to increase its revenue and customer base. The brand name and logo will appear on the lead arm of the jerseys of the players. The cooperative will also run social media campaigns to promote itself in association with the teams.

KMF Managing Director KM Jagadish said, "Cricket is a much-loved sport and this sponsorship aims to reach the Indian diaspora in the global markets, making Nandini a brand across many countries. This will be a great moment for Kannadigas as a home-grown brand becomes a global one." Asked why the Indian cricket team was not sponsored, he said the costs are too high and "KMF won't be able to offer such large amounts." P5

## *Gehlot Jr strives for a win to shed born identity*

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

AMONG the most keenly watched Lok Sabha contests in Rajasthan is the one at Jalore-Sirohi, since former chief minister Ashok Gehlot's son Vaibhav is in the fray against Lumbaram Chaudhary of the BJP.

SHOWTIME FOR GLADIATORS

Vaibhav had lost the 2019 general elections from Jodhpur to BJP's Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. The legacy of three-time Congress chief minister Ashok Gehlot, who has never lost an election, looms large over Vaibhav's campaign.

The younger Gehlot is striving to carve out his own identity, emphasising his contributions to the Youth Congress and his active involvement in Jodhpur's political landscape.

However, Vaibhav's journey has not been without controversies. He has been under the Enforcement Directorate's scrutiny over alleged foreign exchange violations related to Triton Hotels and Resorts Pvt Ltd and Vardha Enterprises Pvt Ltd, which surfaced just before the 2023 Assembly elections.

ILLUSTRATION:

His opponent Lumbaram Chaudhary represents the BJP's grassroots strength in the Jalore-Sirohi region.

With a history of active participation in party activities, Chaudhary earned his stripes through hard work and dedication. His tenure as the pradhan of the Sirohi Panchayat Samiti and his leadership roles in the Sirohi BJP unit strengthened his local appeal.

Despite being overlooked in the previous assembly elections, his commitment finally paid off with the Lok Sabha ticket after the BJP dropped its sitting MP Devji Patel. CONTINUED ON: P9